



What Every Consumer Should Know:

Prescription Medications

The next time your physician prescribes a medication, use this checklist to make sure you completely understand everything you need to know about the drug.

- What is this drug intended to do or what is the expected outcome?
- How should I take this prescribed drug?
- Can I adjust the dose and frequency or does the medicine always have to be taken as prescribed?
- What are the most and least common side effects? Are there any risks?
- Is a generic drug available?
- Is there another treatment option?
- How long do I need to take this prescription?
- Is there any written information available about the medicine?

When you use the Internet to find information about prescription medications, be aware of:

- **who** wrote the material (company, individual, or organization).
- **date** the information was compiled.
- **links** to advertisements promoting a treatment or product.

Remember, sometimes less is more. There will be times when the treatment your doctor recommends may *not* include a prescription medication. An example of this is the common cold and flu, which are caused by viral infections. Antibiotics don't work in treating viral infections; your doctor will prescribe them only if you have a bacterial infection.